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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0901
INFO RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000214

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
FOR CA A/S JANICE JACOBS AND S/CT COORDINATOR DANIEL BENJAMIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: EAC GUATEMALA REVIEWS TERRORISM ISSUES INCLUDING VISAS VIPER

REF: 10 STATE 2602

¶1. (SBU) Per reftel, Post's EAC (AMB, DCM, CONS, RSO, AID, NAS, DEA, DHS/ICE, MILGP, DAO, PAS, ADMIN, CLO, ORA, CDC, POL/ECON, DHS/ICE, and Peace Corps) convened January 13. The DCM (EAC chairperson) and Consul General (CG) emphasized the importance of the Visas Viper process, and stressed the role of all members in identifying and reporting potential terrorist activity.

¶2. (SBU) The DCM pointed out that the Visas Viper process essentially worked in the December 25, 2009, Nigerian terrorist plot; that vital information was forwarded to Washington via the Visas Viper process. The DCM reminded EAC members of their responsibility to report information related to possible terrorist activities even if they are not formal members of the Visas Viper committee. Terrorist information could come from anywhere and we all need to be on the alert for it. Embassy community members with information on possible terrorist activities were urged to immediately report it, and not wait for a regularly scheduled Visas Viper meeting.

¶3. (SBU) The CG provided historical perspective on the Visas Viper process, adding that the most recent change to the process is for CONS to report to Washington the visa status of anyone submitted for addition through Visas Viper. The CG also emphasized the importance of sharing information.

¶4. (SBU) In that regard, the DHS/USCIS OIC raised concerns that USCIS-Guatemala databases with information related to asylum and refugee applications, immigrant visa petitions, and I-601 waiver requests are not shared with other USG agencies, including State's Consular offices. Instead, if there is a request for information, USCIS-Guatemala must do a manual search of its databases in order to provide the requested information. Further, if USCIS-Guatemala finds any derogatory information on an applicant whose information was originally entered into the IBIS/NCIC index by another USG office or agency, then USCIS-Guatemala must contact the "owner" of the record and work to resolve the issue before the information can be passed to Consular.

¶5. (SBU) The current guidance (STATE 001067 of January 6, 2010) is for Consular Sections to provide the visa status of anyone submitted to the Visas Viper list. Without access to DHS systems, however, there is no mechanism for Consular Sections to check and report these other legal avenues of entrance to the U.S. that a Viper subject or subject's family members may already have in process. Any such petitions filed at a local USCIS office can only be seen by that local office. If any USG entity, such as Consular Sections or even USCIS-HQ, wants to know if an application is pending, that local USCIS office must be contacted to conduct a

manual search of the databases. In order to protect the privacy of applicants, there is no communication with State or any other agency as far as we are aware. If derogatory information is discovered by USCIS, the information is entered into the IBIS database which is intended to be seen by DHS/CBP at ports of entry.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Post is concerned about any gap in information between DHS/USCIS and other agencies regarding asylum, immigrant visas, and I-601 waiver cases. USCIS lookouts are entered into IBIS, to which State/Consular does not have direct access. While we acknowledge and appreciate the need for an applicant's privacy, especially in asylum and refugee cases, this gap in information could easily create a hole through which a terrorist could obtain a visa. Sharing of information is very important in the effort to "connect the dots." Without this information, agencies cannot "connect the dots" and terrorists gain the advantage, as seen on December 25. Please advise. End Comment.
MCFARLAND